THEY HANGED THEM-SELVES?!
YEAH...
THE VILLAGE IS IN AN UPROAR.
WHY...?!
THE KING'S LETTER...
GASP
IT COULDN'T BE.
WASN'T THAT JUST A STUPID PRANK?!
DASH

OO
NOO
DAIKI!
DAI-
KIII!
CLAMOR
CLAMOR
!

KING'S GAME
ORIGIN
CHAPTER 2
STORY BY NOBUAKI KANAZAWA
ART BY J-TA YAMADA

AAAAHH
あああ
DAIKIIII
大輝
FLINCH
ビク!!
CLAW
YURI-SAN, GET AHOLD OF YOUR-SELF!
YOU MUSN'T BREAK DOWN!
CLAW
AAAAH
IT'S TRUE...

大輝!!
DAIKIII
ぐら
SHAKE
だ!!
DAI
き!!
KII
ぐら
SHAKE
だ!!
DAI
ぐら
WOBBLE
は、
GASP
KAZUNARI, YUUJI.
THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH.

ELDER... IS DAIKI REALLY DEAD?
YES. HE DIDN'T COME DOWN FOR BREAK-FAST...
...AND YURI-SAN FOUND HIM HANGING WHEN SHE WENT TO GET HIM.
AND UMEDA-SAN'S DAUGHTER KILLED HERSELF THE SAME WAY.
THIS HAS NEVER HAPPENED TO OUR VILLAGE BEFORE...
SUZUYO, TOO!
HANGED HERSELF ON THE SAME DAY...

IS IT BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T OBEY THE KING?!

D-DAD? YEAH, HE LEAVES BY EIGHT EVERY MORNING.
GRAND-MA'S STILL AT HOME, BUT..
ALL RIGHT. TELL HIM TO COME TO MY HOUSE WHEN HE RETURNS
KAZU-NARI.
AH
WE'VE GOT THE VIEW-ING AND THE FU-NERAL TO PREPARE FOR.
SHIGEKI-SAN'S ALREADY AT WORK, I ASSUME?

I ASSUME YOU'RE GOING TO THE UMEDAS, TOO.
THEY'RE GETTING ON IN YEARS, TRY NOT TO UPSET THEM.
OH—
HE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE LET-TER—
あああああ WAAAAAH
ビクッ FLINCH

C'MON, KAZU-NARI...
R-RIGHT...
あああ AAAH
いやあああ NOOOO
どうして WHY
大輝ぃぃ DAIKI
大輝ぃぃ DAIKI

GOD, WHAT A HORRIBLE COINCI-DENCE...
COINCI-DENCE?
YOU REALLY THINK IT'S UNRE-LATED?!
WE JUST SAW THEM YESTER-DAY, AND NOW SUZUYO AND DAIKI ARE GONE.
IT'S TRUE THAT SUZUYO QUIT ON US...
...AND DAIKI NEVER KNEW IN THE FIRST PLACE.
YOU'RE NOT SAYING THE "KING" FROM THAT LETTER DID IT?

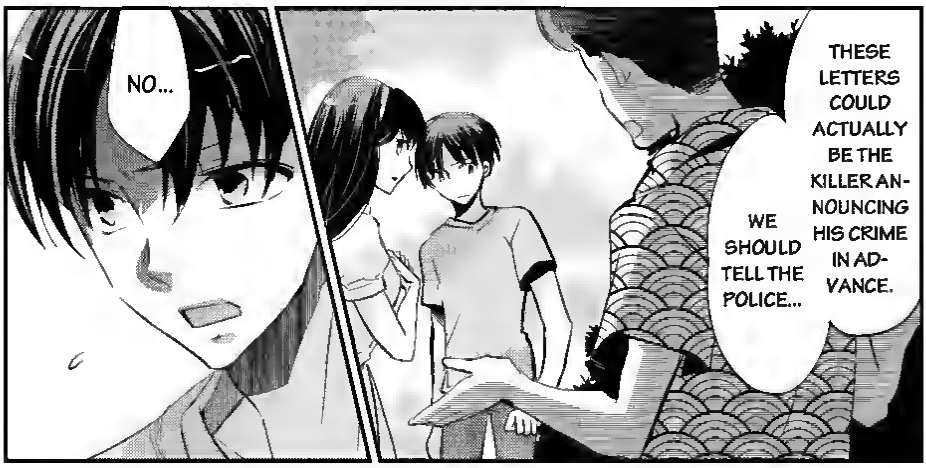
BUT I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING...
...THAT LETTER'S BEHIND THIS SOMEHOW...
BUT I HAVE A HARD TIME BELIEVING THIS KING'S GAME THING MADE THEM COMMIT SUICIDE.
IT DOES SOUND INSANE.
OKAY
LET'S START BY CHECKING YOUR MAILBOX ONE MORE TIME.
MAYBE WE'LL FIND SOMETHING.
THAT LETTER...
YEAH...
FOUND IT AT SEVEN IN THE MORNING
YOU SAID YOU GOT IT IN YOUR MAILBOX, YUUJI?

IT'D BETTER BE EMPTY...
YUU-JI?
WHA-
NO...

THIS IS THE KING'S GAME. ALL VILLAGERS ARE PARTICIPATING. THE KING'S ORDERS ARE ABSOLUTE. PLEASE CARRY THEM OUT BY THE END OF THE DAY.
村人全員で行ってもらう
王様ゲームです
王様の命令は絶対なので
今日の内に従ってください
FLAP
SHI
VER
ZZWEE
ZZWEE

THIS IS THE KING'S GAME. ALL VILLAGERS ARE PARTICIPATING. THE KING'S ORDERS ARE ABSOLUTE. PLEASE CARRY THEM OUT BY THE END OF THE DAY. PARTICIPANTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO QUIT.
ORDER 2:
CATCH ONE LIVING GIANT HORNET FOR EACH MEMBER OF THE POPULATION. IF THE QUOTA IS NOT MET, ONE VILLAGER WILL BE SELECTED AT RANDOM FOR EACH MISSING HORNET, AND THEN CHOPPED INTO BITS.
YOU'RE KIDDING ME...

SUZUYO AND DAIKI ARE DEAD...
...AND YOU WANNA CONTINUE THESE DUMB TRICKS?!
WHO'S DOING THIS?!
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK MORE PRANKS ARE OKAY?!


NO...
WE SHOULD TELL THE POLICE...
THESE LETTERS COULD ACTUALLY BE THE KILLER ANNOUNCING HIS CRIME IN ADVANCE.

AT THE VERY LEAST, I DON'T THINK ANYONE IN OUR GROUP IS THE SENDER.
I DON'T THINK THE VILLAGERS WILL WANT TO INVOLVE THE COPS.
THEY THINK THEY WERE BOTH SUICIDES.
WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE?
I DON'T KNOW.
IT COULD BE SOMEONE OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE.
YOU THINK ONE OF THE ADULTS IS BEHIND THIS JUVENILE CRAP?

NOT A CHANCE.
AN OUTSIDER WOULD STICK OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB IN YONAKI.
WE'RE AS BACKWATER AS IT GETS.
ASSUMING THE CULPRIT IS A VILLAGER MAKES MUCH MORE SENSE.
THEN MAYBE...
GASP
...THE KILLER ESCAPED TO THE VILLAGE AND IS HIDING OUT—
YOU'RE NOT LISTENING.
I'M TELLING YOU IT'S NOT AN OUTSIDER.
SIGH
LET'S GET BACK TO THE LETTER.

YONAKI VILLAGE HAS A POPULATION OF 32.
WITH SUZUYO AND DAIKI GONE, IT'S NOW 30.
IF...IF WE DON'T CARRY OUT THE ORDER IN THE LETTER...
ARE ALL 30 OF US GONNA END UP AS MINCE-MEAT?!

FOR REAL?!
PEOPLE CAN'T JUST CHOP OTHER PEOPLE UP!
RABBLE
RABBLE
HU-
H U H?!
GULP
IT'S A FACT THAT DAIKI AND SUZUYO ARE DEAD.
THE TWO OF THEM ..IT'S COINCI-DENCE! THEY JUST HAPPENED TO KILL THEM-SELVES ON THE SAME DAY!
FORGET THE FACT SHE KNEW ABOUT THE LETTER, SUZUYO DIDN'T LOOK LIKE SOMEONE CONSIDERING SUICIDE.
AND DAIKI NEVER HEARD ABOUT ANY OF THIS.
EVERYONE'S PERFECTLY AWARE IT MAKES NO SENSE THAT THEY HANGED THEMSELVES ON THE SAME MORNING!

FOR MY PART...
I DON'T THINK THIS KING'S GAME IS JUST A PRANK.
THERE'S A POWERFUL EVIL AURA ABOUT IT.
TRUE EVIL.
WHATEVER WE THINK, WE GOTTA TELL THE GROWN UPS...
NAH, KAZUNARI'S RIGHT, THEY WON'T BELIEVE US.
THEY'LL THINK IT'S ONE OF US PLAYING A TRICK AND THAT'LL BE THAT.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

IF WE CATCH ONE GIANT HORNET FOR EACH PERSON IN THE VILLAGE...

LET'S FIND THE CULPRIT OUR-SELVES!

AND WHILE WE INVES-TIGATE, WE'LL FOLLOW HIS ORDERS!

THIS ORDER'S DIFFERENT FROM THE FIRST.
WE'RE RE-SPONSIBLE FOR THE WHOLE VIL-LAGE THIS TIME!

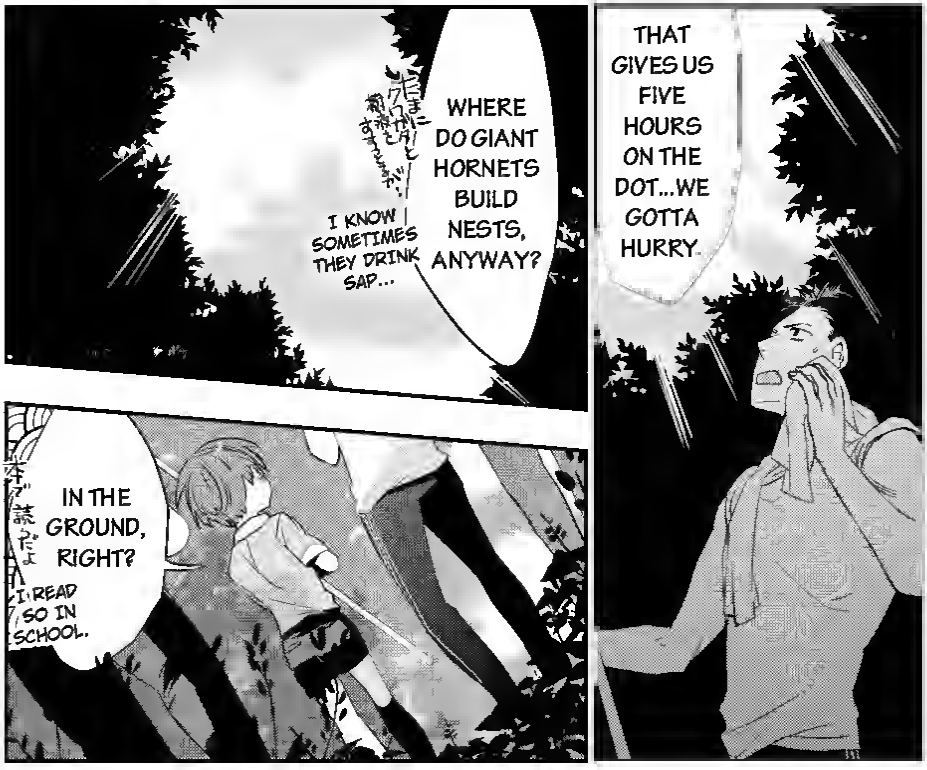
Y-YEAH!
YOU'RE RIGHT!
I'M SURE THE SIX OF US CAN FIGURE THIS OUT.
WE'LL BEAT HIS GAME!

PROB-
ABLY THE
ONLY WAY
TO GET
THAT
MANY...
...IS TO
FIND A
NEST.
SO NOW
THE PROB-
LEM IS,
HOW THE
HELL DO WE
CATCH
GIANT HOR-
NETS
ALIVE?
ESPE-
CIALLY
SO...
A NEST,
HUH...
YEAH, AND
THAT'S
JUST THE
FIRST
STEP.
I MEAN,
THESE ARE
GIANT
HORNETS
WE'RE
TALKING
ABOUT.
I GOT STUNG ONCE
AS A KID AND I WAS
OUT WITH A FEVER
FOR THREE DAYS
IF THEY
GET YOU,
YOU'RE NOT
JUST
GONNA
SHRUG IT
OFF.

WE'VE GOTTA FIND SOME WAY TO CATCH THEM ALIVE!
IF WE DON'T...
RUSTLE!!
RUSTLE
SEE ANY FLYING AROUND, KAZUNARI?
SHUFF
SHUFF

NOPE... NOTHING...
HERE'S A GRASSHOPPER.
LOOK, A BOAR AND HER BABY.
WE KNOW...
WHEW
WE DON'T NEED GRASSHOPPERS OR BOARS!
AND NOT HONEYBEES OR WASPS EITHER!
JUST GIANT HORNETS!

RYUUJI, WHAT TIME YOU GOT?
UMM... ONE O'CLOCK.
YEAH.
ONCE IT'S DARK, WE WON'T EVEN BE ABLE TO FIND AN ANT NEST.
ゴトッ
DSH
NOT WAY OUT HERE
WE NEED TO FIGURE SOME-THING OUT BEFORE THE SUN SETS...


WHERE DO GIANT HORNETS BUILD NESTS, ANYWAY?
I KNOW I SOMETIMES THEY DRINK SAP...
IN THE GROUND, RIGHT?
I READ SO IN SCHOOL.
THAT GIVES US FIVE HOURS ON THE DOT...WE GOTTA HURRY.

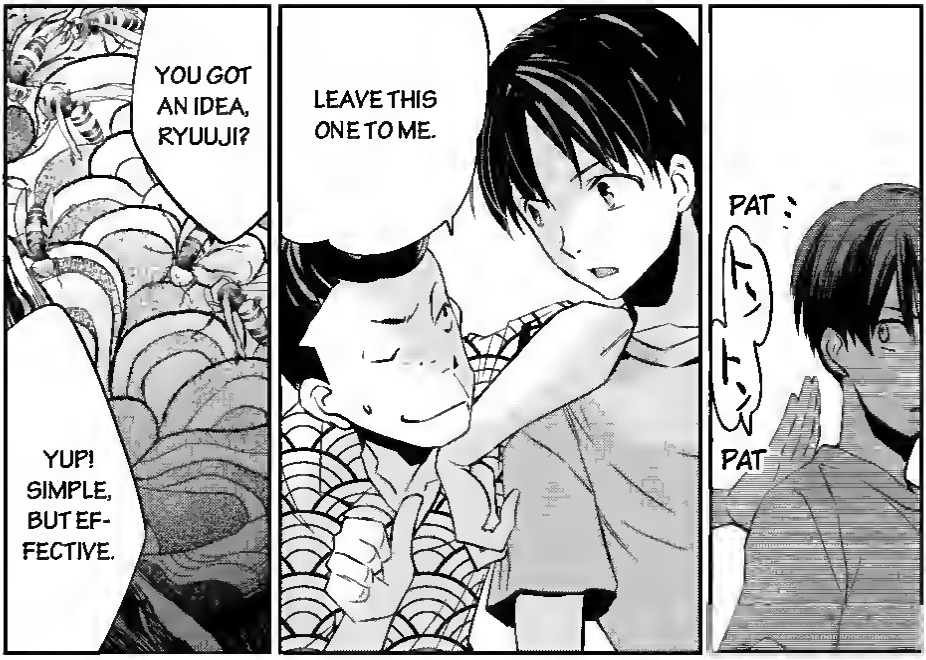
HOW DO WE FIND A NEST IF IT'S IN THE GROUND?
I HEARD YOU HAVE TO PUT BAIT OUT AND LURE THEM INTO A TRAP...
DAMNIT. WE'LL HAVE TO GO BACK FOR SUPPLIES.
THE SUN'LL SET BEFORE WE CAN SET ALL THAT UP.
ARE WE GONNA RUN OUT OF TIME?
WH-AAAH!
WE'LL NEED TO THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE—
SHUFF
SHUFF
SHUFF
SHUFF

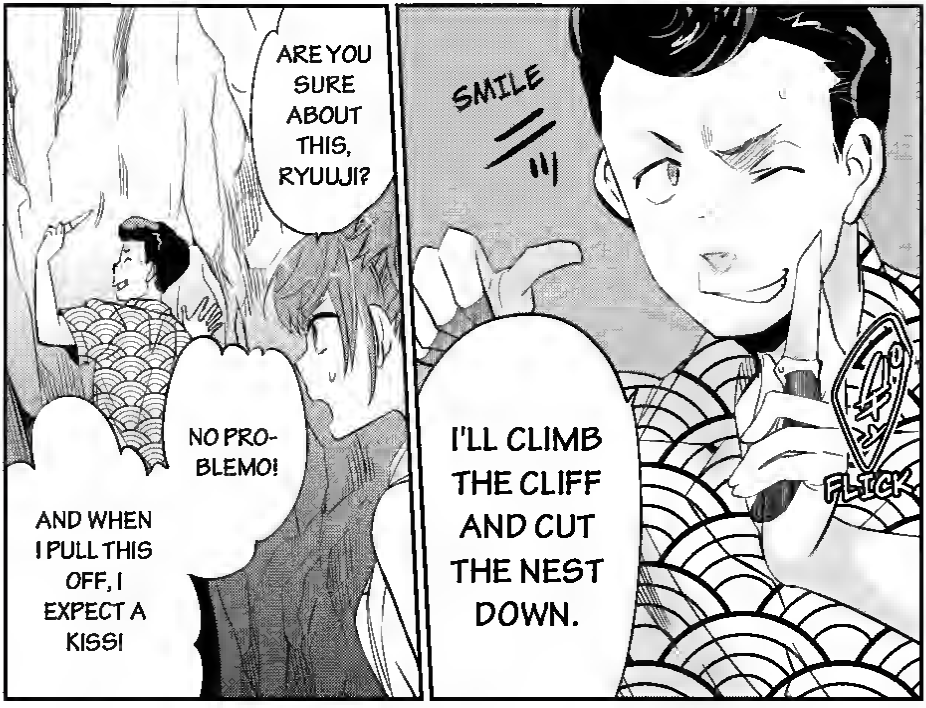
OH
KAZU-NARI.
...AND YUUJI, NATSUKO... THE GANG'S ALL HERE, HUH?
SH-SHUU-HEI-SAN...
WHAT'RE YOU DOING WAY OUT HERE?
I THOUGHT ALL THE ADULTS WERE AT DAIKI OR SUZUYO'S HOUSES
A HUNTER'S NO HELP TO ANYONE IN THAT SITUA-TION.
AND I WANTED TO CHECK MY BOAR TRAPS.
BOAR TRAP?
RUSTLE

YEAH, I SAW TRACKS OUT HERE THE OTHER DAY...
PAT
PAT
...SO I SPREAD SOME SPECIAL BAIT.
I DON'T JUST HUNT BASED ON MY GUT, LIKE MY OLD MAN DID.
I CHASE MY PREY DOWN CAREFULLY UNTIL I'VE GOT IT CORNERED, THEN BANG. DONE.
I MIXED THIS BAIT SPECIFICALLY TO ATTRACT BOARS.
WE JUST SAW A MOTHER BOAR AND HER BABY OUT FOR A STROLL.
YOU DID?!
ACTUALLY SHUUHEI-SAN, WE NEEDED TO ASK YOU SOMETHING...

A GIANT HOR-NET'S NEST?
YOU GONNA FRY UP SOME LARVA?
ハチノコでも食べるつもり
YOU KNOW THE LIME-STONE CAVE BY FIELD YOU PASSED THROUGH TO GET UP HERE?
I SAW A NEST UP ON THE CLIFF FACE.
A PORT IN THE STORM!
MANY THANKS TO YOUR SAVIOR SHIJIMI!
RYUUJI, WHAT TIME YOU GOT?
UMM...
WE'VE GOT A WAY TO WIN.
NO ONE HAS TO DIE THIS TIME!

THERE! KAZU-NARI, THERE IT IS!
TUESDAY AUGUST 9, 2:12 P.M.
WE NEED TO GET CLOSER...


YOU GOT AN IDEA, RYUUJI?
YUP! SIMPLE, BUT EFFECTIVE.
LEAVE THIS ONE TO ME.
PAT
トン
トン
PAT


ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, RYUUJI?
NO PROBLEMO!
AND WHEN I PULL THIS OFF, I EXPECT A KISS!
SMILE
I'LL CLIMB THE CLIFF AND CUT THE NEST DOWN.
FLICK

GRAB
HH!!
WELL, YUUJI'S GOT POWER BUT NO SPEED...
AND KAZUNARI'S JUST AVERAGE ALL AROUND.
I SUPPOSE RYUUJI IS THE BEST CHOICE.
TAKE IT SLOW! BE CAREFUL!
SKRUT
SKUFFLE
BZZZ
BZZ
BZZ

YEAH..
WILL HE BE OKAY?
RYUUJI MAY BE SHORT, BUT HE'S REALLY ATH-LETIC.
HE'LL HAVE NO PROB-LEM CLIMB-ING THAT CLIFF.
SHH
BE CAREFUL!
DON'T GET CARELESS... WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF TIME.
FU
STAB
SHINK!

BZZ
BZZ
BZZZ
BZZZ
RYUU-
JI!